

The Punta Gorda Herald

VOL. XVI

PUNTA GORDA, FLA., NOON, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1908.

NO. 7.

HERE IS THAT LETTER.

The One Which Mr. Stockton Wrote to Mr. Flagler.

By way of introduction to Mr. Stockton's letter to Mr. Flagler, it may be necessary to give a brief resume of the discussion which justifies its publication.

The Tallahassee Sun, which is recognized as the political organ of Mr. Stockton and his lieutenants, in its issue of Dec. 21, 1907, on page five, quoted that gentleman as saying:

"The Stockton Brothers owned a majority of the stock of the Times-Union from 1889 to 1896, and the paper was run as a fearless Democratic people's paper. While it was under our control, it never cringed and worshiped at the feet of corporations, but defied them against tremendous odds."

Commenting upon this assertion by Mr. Stockton, THE HERALD alluded to a letter written by him to Mr. Flagler, which letter was read by Senator Tallaferra at a public meeting in Tampa four years ago and represented Mr. Stockton as apologizing to Mr. Flagler for something said or done by the Times-Union.

In the Tallahassee Sun of Jan. 11th, doubt is expressed that Mr. Stockton ever wrote such a letter and the editor of THE HERALD is challenged to produce it. In compliance with this demand, the letter, reproduced from an exact photographic copy, is herewith given in full. The reader will observe from its contents that just before it was written, Mr. Stockton was opposing the nomination of Judge Henry L. Mitchell for governor and at the same time trying to thwart the plans and efforts of the Farmers' Alliance.

The letter is dated Jacksonville, Fla., June 17, 1892, and reads as follows:

DEAR SIR:—Yours of the 10th at hand and contents carefully noted. I regret exceedingly that there should be any difference in the facts as stated in my letter of the 23rd ult. The information was received by my brother Telfair, from an official of the J. T. & K. W. R. R., who stated that Judge Mitchell had rendered this decision. Since receiving your letter, my brother has investigated the whole matter and finds that Judge Mitchell was a member of the Court at that time but did not hand down the decision. I would state, further, that we are now heartily supporting Judge Mitchell and regret that we have done him an injustice.

As to the general expressions contained in my letter, I am quite confident I was right. However, there is no use in discussing the subject further, as the future will determine whether or not I have done Judge Mitchell an injustice.

The nomination of Judge Mitchell was brought about by a combination of Judge Mitchell's friends and the Farmers' Alliance, as will be shown by the enclosed copy of the platform as promulgated by the Tampa Convention.

The Farmers Alliance claim that they have not received all that was promised to them for their part in Judge Mitchell's nomination. It was definitely agreed between

Judge Mitchell's friends and the Farmers Alliance, that the Convention would adopt, what is known as the St. Louis platform. Our friends preferred defeat rather than submit to the demands of the Alliance.

When I meet you I will discuss the matter and will convince you that our position was not only an honest one, but for the best interests of the State. **I very much deplore that anything has arisen to displease and cause a lack of confidence in us.**

We have already secured a large portion of the outstanding stock and hope soon to complete the financial agreement entered into with you last March, **and trust in the future that you will have no cause to complain of our management.**

Yours very truly,
[Signed] J. N. C. STOCKTON.
To Mr. H. M. Flagler,
New York, N. Y.

Times-Union:—The Palatka Times-Herald observes that "the state pardoning board is again being roundly censured by certain interests." The "certain interests" alluded to comprise the entire body of such law, respecting people of Florida as do not believe in nullifying the action of the courts in the case of murderers who have had every chance before juries and courts of appeal that common sense could ask for and yet escape with light punishment because the pardoning board allows itself to be overpersuaded by the attorneys representing the defendants.

Tampa Honors Gilchrist.

Tampa Tribune, Feb. 9:—Gen. Albert W. Gilchrist, of Punta Gorda, leading candidate for governor and the statesman from the "great county of DeSoto," is in the city for a few days looking after his interests and greeting his many friends.

He has been extended a cordial ovation from all the citizens of Tampa, and was the cynosure of all eyes at the Tampa Bay hotel, the fair grounds and on the streets. He is by long odds the most popular man in South Florida, and his thousands of friends are elated over an opportunity to reward him for his intrinsic worth as a citizen by placing him in the gubernatorial chair.

Offers of support from influential men from all parts of the state are being made to South Florida's candidate every day, and knowing ones predict his election by an overwhelming majority.

A committee of well known gentlemen called on the Tribune last night and suggested the advisability of the citizens of Tampa giving South Florida's candidate a dollar dinner soon after the festivities of the state fair, thus affording them an opportunity to express their appreciation of an aspirant for political honors who is not allied with any faction, who stands on his own platform and is making a race for the office on a high plane with all of the corporation, populism and other isms entirely eliminated. He is what might be truthfully termed a candidate of the people, and they will see that he is triumphantly landed at the State capital.

SCHOOLS OWN LANDS

In the Everglades District, Thinks Gen. Gilchrist.

When Gen. Gilchrist was in Jacksonville last week, he was interviewed by a Times-Union reporter, and what he said was given in that paper of the 5th inst. Following is the report of the interview:

Gen. Gilchrist has recently made a trip down the East Coast; and when asked by a Times-Union reporter what he thought of the drainage operations now in progress near Fort Lauderdale, said:

"I was very much pleased with it as far as it goes. They are operating in that vicinity two powerful dredges. When I was there, Gov. Broward happened to be there also, and we inspected the work together. The dredges, so far as I am able to judge, are perfect pieces of machinery, strong and powerful. I also looked at the profile of the work."

"By the first of March, the dredges will have about cut through the rock foundation. Exclusive of the cost of the machinery, three miles of canal will cost about \$10,000 per mile, as the canals are seventy feet wide and fourteen feet deep. The cost of excavation is about 5 cents a cubic yard. Owing to the amount of rock underlying the soil, this is done very cheaply. I saw tomatoes growing well on that soil. In my part of the world it costs from \$20 to \$50 an acre to clear land of roots and stumps. This soil has no roots and stumps on it, and it costs but a trifle to burn off an acre of saw grass. I'd like to see a few stalks of sugar cane on it."

"I understand it is about fifty-eight miles to Lake Okeechobee. Assuming that the cost would be the same, it would take fully a million dollars to extend the two canals to the lake. After the dredges get out of the rock foundation, the expense will be a great deal less."

"I live in a flat-woods country. A canal will drain only a limited area. Alligator creek, where the railroad crosses it about four miles south of Punta Gorda, is about the same depth and width as one of these canals. This creek drains the country for a distance of between a quarter and a half a mile on each side of it. It thus appears that many canals will be required. I think the soil as far as the dredges have gone will prove productive. For miles, so far as the eye can see, the soil appears to be the same. The whole thing resolves itself into dollars and cents. The sinews of war is money. I learn there has been an unusual deficiency in rainfall. Time alone can tell the tale."

"I notice that you have been writing in reference to the title of the land in the Everglades," said the reporter. "What is your idea as to the eventual ownership of these lands?"

"I have quoted various reasons set forth by the trustees, and I have quoted in connection therewith such decisions of the supreme court of Florida and of the United States as came to my knowledge. Recently Superintendent Holloway stated that the state school

board had brought suit for this land. In this connection, I would invite attention to section 4 of article 12 of the constitution of Florida, under the heading as to 'What constitutes the State school fund,' the interest of which shall be exclusively applied for the public school purposes. You will find the following: 'Twenty-five per cent of the sales of public lands which are now, or may hereafter be owned by the State.'

"I haven't with me a statement showing the amount of money which has been collected from the sale of the state lands. There is the Disston sale of 4,000,000 acres for \$1,000,000. This was made about 1881. The principal and the interest on this \$1,000,000, together with the interest and principal on other sales, will about take all the state lands."

"On January 1, 1907, the trustees held in round numbers, 2,600,000 acres."

"There were two hundred thousand acres of this scattered throughout the state, and there were 2,400,000 acres in the Everglades patent. Every corporation which received a land grant took it subject to this section of the constitution. It looks to me as if the school fund will be entitled to about all the remaining lands."

"How is your campaign getting along?" asked the reporter.

"The indications are that I am getting stronger every day. The whole thing resolves itself in securing enough votes," said Gen. Gilchrist, who, it will be remembered, has all along maintained that he will be the next governor of Florida if he gets enough votes.

The Trouble With Oranges.

A gentleman from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, spent a few days last week in Leesburg. In speaking of Florida oranges, he said it is not at all strange that the price is now low. He said that in his section of the country a man will not buy a Florida orange at any price. The cause of this, he said, is very plain. In the fall of the year, the Florida growers ship large quantities of green fruit to that country—fruit so green that it is neither palatable nor healthful. By this fruit, the first shipped to them, the people form their opinion of Florida oranges. They buy them once, but not again. They do not know what time in the year oranges ripen, but suppose the first shipments are fair samples.

What are the people of Florida going to do about this matter? There is no question but that a few individuals are ruining the reputation of our fruit. The best solution is for the State to have a pure food law that will prohibit the shipment of oranges before the middle of October or the first of November.—Leesburg Commercial.

Apalachicola Times:—The Starke Telegraph thinks Mr. Stockton's wire edge needs grinding. Don't get impatient, dear Telegraph; the "grinding" is just off on its first revolution. It will gather speed shortly, and before the campaign closes, the evolutions will have become so rapid that the buzzing, ripping sounds can be heard from the Atlantic to the Gulf.

DESOTO AT THE FAIR.

Our County's Exhibit Attracts Attention.

The Tampa correspondent of the Times-Union, writing last Saturday, makes the following gratifying notice of DeSoto county's exhibit at the State Fair:

"One of the finest arrays of products from any of the counties represented at the fair is that of DeSoto, in charge of Fair Commissioner Ed Scott of that county."

In this magnificent collection of DeSoto are over 400 handsome pineapples, all of the smooth cayenne variety, the largest of which weighs ten and one-half pounds and the smallest in the collection tipping the scales at four pounds. These are shown by Gen. Albert W. Gilchrist of Punta Gorda, who also has on exhibition a pinery set out and growing under the shedded enclosure similar to those in which pineapples are grown in DeSoto and other South Florida counties.

A splendid collection of potted plants and cut flowers is a feature of a very comprehensive display made by Mr. William Crouch of Punta Gorda, who has in his cut flower collection hundreds of hyacinths, carnations, jonquils, lilies, roses, etc. The horticultural exhibit of DeSoto, while not as large as some of the other counties, is a most comprehensive one, embracing bearing orange, lemon and grapefruit trees and banana plants besides the boxed fruit in attractive shape, the finest specimens in the department of DeSoto's show being from C. S. Bushnell of Arcadia.

Another very suggestive evidence of the versatility of DeSoto's soil is the display of native woods, which are shown in forty-five varieties in their natural state and besides there is shown a comprehensive exhibit of naval stores and manufactured crates for fruit and vegetables.

In DeSoto's agricultural department are great stacks of corn in the ear, tobacco, peanuts, chufas and grains. In preserved products are shown cans and jars of almost everything grown in this section preserved in most tempting style.

Syrups of four different kinds are displayed as well as the cane from which it is made, some of the latter being sixteen feet high.

Strawberry plants of prolific growth and bearing are shown, many of them having a quart of fine, large, luscious berries on them.

In the vegetable department DeSoto has a most excellent showing, embracing cabbage, turnips, peppers, cucumbers, sweet and Irish potatoes, celery, lettuce, radishes, etc. There is one variety of the latter in which is shown one weighing twenty-five pounds. The vegetables are displayed in a most unique, huge pyramid, reaching high into the air, crowned with a growing collard.

A cured meat display also forms part of DeSoto's fine exhibit, embracing salt and smoked hams, bacon, sides and jowls, besides a very fine show of dried beef and mutton. These are very appropriate.

(Continued on page 2.)